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Crow's loan to Kelly not enough to beat Ocheltree

By TIM HADDOCK
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SAUGUS — Brian Kelly's chances of keeping his points lead in the NASCAR Late Model division looked bleak Saturday night at Saugus Speedway.

Kelly blew the engine in his Oldsmobile during the trophy dash before 2,530 fans and possibly any chance of racing in the main event.

Enter Rick Crow.

The Canyon Country resident gave his car to Kelly so he could run in the feature race and hopefully maintain his points lead.

"He's number one in the points race and I have a car that can win the main event," Crow said. "I missed the first night and last week. I can't be the champ, so let him be the champ."

Despite Crow's generosity, the checkered flag was not in Kelly's future. Rich Ocheltree won the 40-lap feature race, leading from start to finish.

"It's a big win for us," said Ocheltree, who won his first feature of the year. "We really needed to win one big."

Kelly's chances of winning all but ended in lap 36 when Craig Rayburn and Gerrit Cromsigt collided with the Arleta resident on the back straightaway.

"It's a fast car. I just didn't want to scratch it," Kelly said. "After I saw cars dropping out, I just wanted to finish the race.

"Rick Crow saved us big. It's good. It's fast. And it did 40 laps. That's all I needed. That guy saved my life."

Once Crow decided to let Kelly drive his car, some adjustments had to be made.

I'm jammed in the car and he has a bigger belly than I do," Crow said.

As a result, Kelly removed the dash board and lowered the steering column.

"He told me as long as I can fit in it, I can race it," Kelly said.

In a battle for second place in lap 22, Cromsigt and Rayburn tangled through turns two and three. Both drivers suffered flat tires and had to pit to replace them.

Ocheltree maintained his early lead.

In the Grand Am Modified feature race, Dave Blankenship led for all 40 laps en route to victory.

Blankenship entered the night's races third in points, 26 behind first place Dave Phipps.

Phipps finished second to maintain a 24-point lead over Blankenship.

Brian Horst won the 12-lap Pure Stocks feature race. Marion Deist crashed into the turn three wall in lap two and left the race.

Crow won the Late Model trophy dash, Blankenship won the Grand Am Modified version, and Joe Hansen won the Pure Stock trophy dash.

Canyon Country resident John Watkinson suffered engine problems during warm-up laps prior to the Grand Am Modified trophy dash and withdrew from the race.

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